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State of Illinois  
Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor



Illinois Department on Aging  
Charles D. Johnson, Director



# Break the Silence

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## Report Elder Abuse

Illinois Department  
on Aging



# Do I know what Elder Abuse is?

Elder abuse is a term referring to any negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult. Illinois law defines abuse, neglect and exploitation as:

- ▶ ***Physical Abuse*** — inflicting physical pain or injury upon an older adult.
  - ▶ ***Sexual Abuse*** — touching, fondling, intercourse, or any other sexual activity with an older adult, when the older person is unable to understand, unwilling to consent, threatened or physically forced.
  - ▶ ***Emotional Abuse*** — verbal assaults, threats of abuse, harassment or intimidation.
  - ▶ ***Confinement*** — restraining or isolating an older person, other than for medical reasons.
  - ▶ ***Passive neglect*** — the caregiver's failure to provide an older person with life's necessities, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter or medical care.
  - ▶ ***Willful deprivation*** — willfully denying an older person medication, medical care, shelter, food, a therapeutic device or other physical assistance, and thereby exposing that person to the risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm – except when the older person has expressed an intent to forego such care.
  - ▶ ***Financial Exploitation*** — the misuse or withholding of an older person's resources by another, to the disadvantage of the elderly person or the profit or advantage of someone else.
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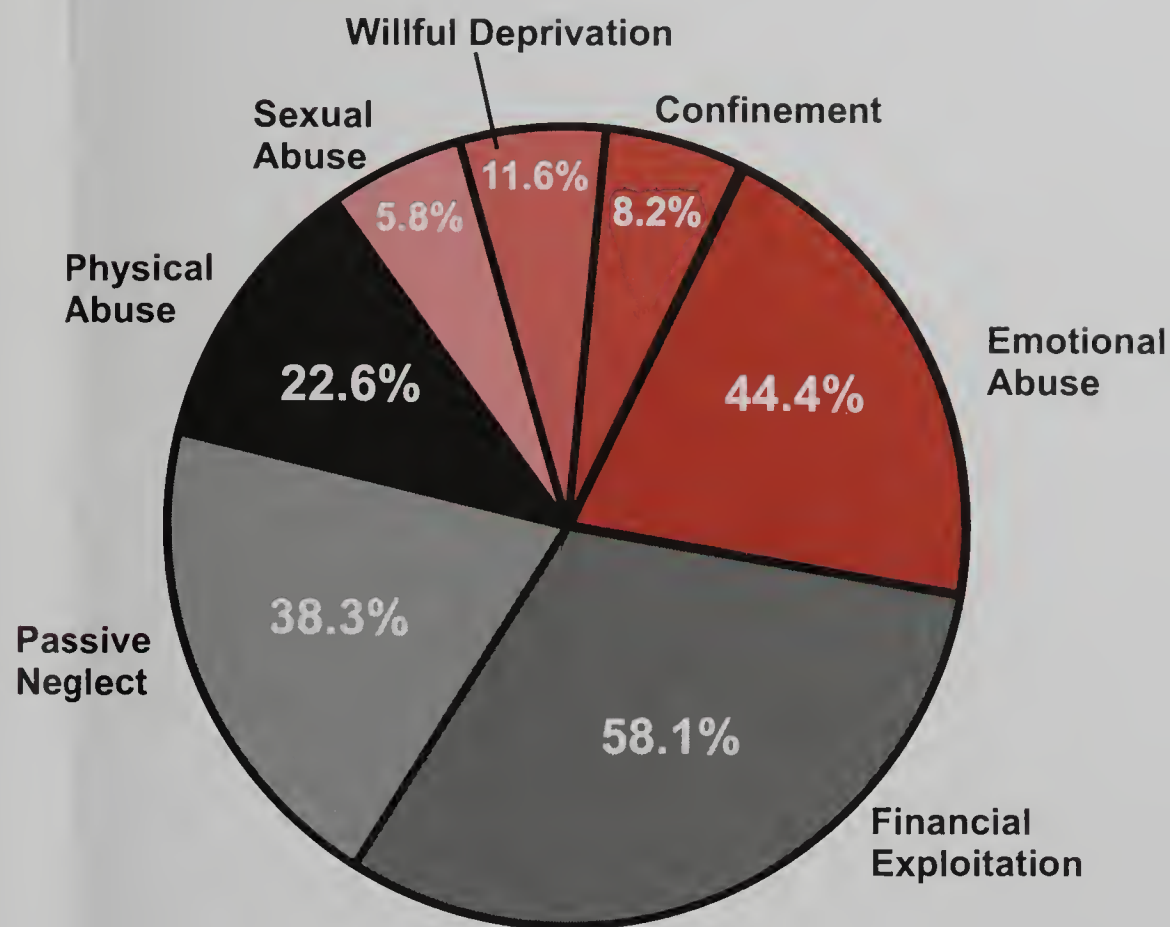
## What else do I need to know?

- **Elder abuse does not discriminate.** Elder abuse can affect people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and can affect both men and women. An elder abuse victim may be your neighbor, friend or family member.

It is estimated that only one in every 10 cases of elder abuse is reported.

- **We must all do our part to report elder abuse.** In 2004, more than 8,300 reports of elder abuse were made in Illinois. These reports are helping to break the silence of elder abuse.

- **Your report can make a difference.** Reporting elder abuse gives victims the opportunity to receive the help they need to stop the abuse, and can reduce their risk of abuse in the future.



"Types of Elder Abuse Reported" from 2004 data.

## What should I do if I suspect Elder Abuse?

### Report.

- **Voluntary Reporters.** Any person can voluntarily report. By law, anyone making an elder abuse report in good faith has civil and criminal immunity from liability and professional disciplinary action.
- **Mandated Reporters.** Certain professionals are required by law to report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of persons age 60 years and over who live in the community and "because of dysfunction are unable to report for themselves." Among those required to report suspected abuse are: doctors, nurses, psychologists, dentists, social service workers and law enforcement personnel.

No matter who reports, the identity of the reporter is not disclosed without the written permission of the reporter or by order of a court.

# How can I break the silence?

Anyone who suspects that an older person is being mistreated by someone should call one of the following numbers:

- ▶ The Department on Aging's **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966** (Voice and TTY) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
- ▶ The Department on Aging's **After-hours Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-800-279-0400** (after-hours, weekends and holidays)

Elder Abuse and Neglect Program services are provided through local community agencies. Reports may also be made directly to the elder abuse provider agency where the older person resides.

For local information visit:

[www.state.il.us/aging/1directory/elder\\_abuse.pdf](http://www.state.il.us/aging/1directory/elder_abuse.pdf)

**Confidential**

All reports are kept confidential and anonymous reports are accepted.

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**Illinois Department on Aging**  
421 E. Capitol Ave., #100  
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1789

**Senior HelpLine:**  
**1-800-252-8966** (Voice and TTY)

Download this brochure at [www.state.il.us/aging](http://www.state.il.us/aging) in the "News and Publications" section.

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (Voice and TTY).